

Meeting Summary
January 18, 2012 - DRAFT

Members Present: Sanita Alrey-DeBose, Melissa Brown, Joseph Capuano, Regina Dull, Jonathan Fink, Sean Gabaree, Chelsea Johnson, Michael Kallens, Larysa Kurylas, Sara Lappano, Tom Martin, Manuel Ochoa, Susan Petersen, Dianne Whitaker

Members Absent: Robert Caggiano, Zoe Lefkowitz, Chris Lindsay, James Mensah, Patrick Nachu, Erin Roberts

Guests: Ben Gross, on behalf of Wheaton Patch; Ed Murtagh on behalf of GreenWheaton; and Karen Cordry on Behalf of Kensington Heights Civic Association (KHCA); Stacy Silber, on behalf of Lerch, Early & Brewer; Mark Rivers, on behalf of Lowe Enterprises; and Greg Ossont, Deputy Director, Department of General Services (DGS).

Call to Order: Jonathan Fink, Chair, convened the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

Approval of October Meeting Summary – A motion to approve the December 21, 2011 meeting summary was made by Ms. Brown and seconded by Ms Alrey-DeBose. The motion passed unanimously.

Redevelopment Report – Mr. Klein reported the following:

- **County Executive Budget Forum** – January 17, County Executive held a Budget Forum briefing at the Mid-County Recreational Center. While the forum was billed to address the operating budget, with the release of the Capital Budget that same day, much of the discussion dealt with the Capital Budget. Questioners addressed housing, social services, fiscal strategy, the Wheaton Library/Recreation Center, and redevelopment impacts on small businesses
- **B.F. Saul Co. /Wheaton's New Downtown** – Engineering working continues on traffic analysis, geo-tech testing, options for bus operations during construction, bus bay layout, and the Ennalls-Price road connection. The County and WMATA provided project terms to B.F. Saul, countering their proforma assumptions submitted last May to the public partners. The Maryland Department of Transportation is reviewing the fiscal impact analysis prepared by Jones, Lang, LaSalle, a global real estate services firm.
- **The FY 13 – 18 Capital Budget** includes funding for a platform upon which 600,000 sf of office, 120-room hotel and retail will be built. Additionally, the M-NCPPC element of the CIP includes funding for preliminary planning regarding headquarters relocation to the Wheaton's New Downtown project.
- **Wheaton Sector Plan** – On January 26, the Planning Board is scheduled to vote on filing a Sectional Map Amendment to implement the recommendations of the approved and adopted Wheaton CBD and Vicinity Sector Plan.
- **Safeway/Patriot/Foulger Pratt** – Demolition of the old Safeway is complete and excavation continues. Patriot reports that the process is going well and anticipates that concrete pouring for the foundation will begin in mid-February Construction

of the new Safeway store is anticipated to take about 18 months with an additional 6 months for the residential construction.

Lowe Enterprises (11141 Georgia Ave) – Mr. McGinnity introduced Mark Rivers of Lowe Enterprises and Stacy Silber of Lerch, Early and Brewer. Mr. Rivers and Ms Silber reported the following:

- Lowe is a full-service real state company that has been in business for 40 years. They invest, develop and manage a variety of types of real estate including residential, commercial, hospitality and mixed use. The company is based in Los Angeles and has a number of regional offices in the U.S., including Washington, D.C. Mr. Rivers is based in the D.C. office.
- The company has done a number of projects in the D.C. area including the Air Rights Building in Bethesda, Chevy Chase Pavilion, and the City Vista mixed use residential/retail project in D.C.
- The company acquired 11141 Georgia Avenue in October 2011 and plans to convert the building from a commercial office use to residential apartments. Retaining some commercial office space on the street level remains a consideration.
- Lowe plans to give existing commercial tenants 6-month notice to vacate the building once the project is approved.
- The company proposes to retain the basic structure of the building but increase its density from 5 stories to 13 stories - approximately 165 feet in height through Hambro system type construction.
- Approximately 195 rental apartments are planned, either studios or 1-bedroom units.
- The target market is young, professionals moving into the D.C. metro area for work who desire independent living in an affordable, urban environment.
- The company's research indicates a diminished need for parking and is proposing a .5:1 parking ratio. The downward slope of the property toward the rear of the building allows for the possibility of some structured parking as part of the building; however, Lowe is in discussions with the neighboring Archstone Wheaton apartments to determine if shared parking can be accommodated. Currently, a portion of Archstone's structured parking remains unleased.
- The company's timeline for the project is aggressive estimating that Construction will start in one year and take 16 months to complete the conversion. A 2014 opening is planned.
- The company does not see the project as a long-term investment for its portfolio, but an eventual sale would likely be to an institutional investor, such as a pension fund.

CIP Budget - Mr. Ossont, DGS Deputy Director, gave an overview of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Budget process and County Executive's proposed FY13 CIP budget for the Wheaton Redevelopment Program. He advised of the following:

- The process typically begins with Program of Requirement (POR) – which addresses the respective uses for a building/project, and what must be built to accommodate those uses. The POR is initiated by the respective Department/Agency that will use the facility and DGS works closely with the respective department(s) to determine cost estimates. This is a lengthy process but necessary to develop an accurate budget.
- The next step is Facility Planning where Architects and engineers become involved in the process to further assess feasibility and define costs.
- After further review and discussion, a Program Budget is finalized and submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review. This process runs from September to December each year and hundreds of projects are considered.
- OMB “gets into the weeds”, interacting with DGS and the respective departments to fully understand how estimates are determined, budget assumptions, pricing, escalators, and project timing, as well as how it fits with other CIP requests as well. Departments are expected to defend their CIP requests.
- OMB then submits their version of the proposed CIP Budget to the County Executive, who reviews the proposed Budget with OMB and has his own questions, with respect to CIP as well as his administrative agenda. By January 15, it must be finalized and forwarded to the County Council for review, possible modification, and approval.
- The Council scrutinizes the budget as well, conducting staff reviews, Council Work Sessions, and public hearings. There are always modifications at every stage of the process. The Council is required to approve and adopt a budget by June 1.
- The County Executive’s recommended budget is not necessarily what will finally be passed by Council.
- Projects in the Wheaton CIP have been adjusted to insure bonding capacity. The cost of the Price-Ennalls connection was removed from the Wheaton Redevelopment CIP and placed in the Dept. of Transportation’s (DOT) CIP, since a master planned connection could best be accommodated through DOT. The connection will be in next CIP Cycle in 2 years.
- For Phase II of the B.F. Saul Project, the County desires that Town Center to be built concurrent with Saul’s development of Lot 13. In the draft proposed CIP, dollars were programmed for the purchase - from the Parking Lot District (PLD) - of that portion of land needed for the Town Center. By law, PLD has to be compensated for this property and is required to value the property at its “highest & best use”. Because plans for Lot 13 call for the construction of public parking underground on the site, the PLD is developing different scenarios, which eliminated the need to include purchase dollars in the CIP for the Town Square property.
- DGS anticipates the need to go back to the Council for additional FY 16/17 dollars to complete the redevelopment program. The immediate need is to secure a General Development Agreement (GDA) in place as soon as possible. This will define and strengthen the request for additional dollars for FY16/17.
- The project remains a County Executive priority. Aspects of the CIP have been restructured, but still remain.
- The County plans to ask state for monetary support for this project next year.

- Regarding the Wheaton Library/Community Center, the priority was keeping project in the FY 13 CIP. The project timing has been pushed back, but still remains in this 6-year CIP cycle. All recognize that new facility is needed, but the project is in competition with other CIP requests. By deferring, the project remains in the CIP.
- WRAC Member Diane Whitaker advised that there have been significant changes in Program of Requirements (POR) for the Wheaton Library. It was initially developed 5 years ago and does not take into account significant shifts in technology. The former POR for the library is not where we will be going in the next 5 yrs.
- DGS is working with Recreation to conduct a feasibility study to get harder cost estimates. The feasibility study is expected in July/August. The Design Phase is programmed for 2014, which is when an architect will be hired.
- Councilmember Reimer is considering advocating for a CIP which moves Library construction closer - 2016 instead 2018.
- The upcoming Operating Budget cycle will push for increases in DGS budget for additional maintenance for the Library.

Subcommittee Reports

- Economic Development – Mr. Capuano advised of the following:
 - The subcommittee is awaiting a response from the County Executive Leggett regarding WRAC's letter concerning the Coalition for Fair Redevelopment of Wheaton.
 - The subcommittee held its recent meeting at Los Chorros restaurant and spoke with owners to find out their concerns. The committee met with 2 generations of owners who indicated limited awareness of redevelopment efforts and resources are available from the County. Next month the committee will meet with the owners of Moby Dick Seafood & Sushi.
- Project Review – The committee has two letter to write: one in support of the Lowe Enterprises project presented earlier, and the second to the Department of Housing and community Affairs, requesting that resources be committed to revising Wheaton's Streetscape Standards.

MOTION: Mr. Martin made a motion that the Committee authorize Ms. Peterson to write a letter to the Department of Housing and Community Affairs on behalf of WRAC requesting that the process of revising the Wheaton Streetscape Standards be initiated.

SECONDED: by Ms. Brown

APPROVED: Unanimously by the Committee

- Planning & Visioning – Mr. Martin reported the following:
 - The subcommittee worked last month on revisions and updates to WRAC Charter and the Vision Statement and will continue this process at its next subcommittee meeting

- The subcommittee proposed that WRAC give awards to businesses or property owners who by renovation or upgrade are investing in Wheaton. Response from the full WRAC members was positive and Planning & Visioning will explore this further at their next meeting
- **GreenWheaton Update** - The group is Partnering with County on implementation of the new Bag Laws and hosted a hosted showing of “Bag it” movie
 - February’s Focus will community Gardens and they will focus on Crossway Community Inc.’s community garden
 - March’s Theme will be Water – Green Streets coming to Wheaton. DEP and DOT will give talk about Green Streets Efforts – Utilize landscaping to create biofiltration systems to cleanse pollutant stormwater as well as beautify streets
 - April: Partner with Brookside Gardens for Earth day activities

Public Comment: Karen Cordry, former Chair of WRAC appeared on behalf of Kensington Heights Civic Association to convey the association’s position on Westfield’s request for a parking waiver. After the presentation Mr. fink suggested that in light of the additional information offered WRAC revise it letter of support to contain the recommendation that community concerns be considered and qualifying that WRAC’s support of the waiver addressed requirements for additional parking spaces but not a reduction of reduction in additional spaces, but not existing spaces.

Motion to Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.